Pakistani offer to accord MFN status to India

2248. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Pakistan had offerd to accord India the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status;

(b) if so, Government's response thereto; and

(c) whether Government have also offered to grant MFN status to Pakistan and the resultant trade relations between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Being a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), India grants MFN status to all WTO members including Pakistan. While India has not put any restriction on import from Pakistan, Pakistan allows import of only a small positive list of 600 items from India. Recently Pakistan has issued notification adding 78 more items to this positive list.

Monitoring mechanism for ISO Certification

2249. SHRI B.P. SINGHAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government departments are instructing their units to seek ISO 9000 and 14001 certification;

(b) if so, in the absence of any statutory monitoring mechanism to check the veracity of ISO certifying agencies, what would be the worth of such certificates;

(c) whether Government propose to set up a foolproof mechanism to ensure the validity and authenticity of every ISO certificate issued in the country; and

(d) if not, whether ISO certificates would not loose all credibility not only in India but even in the international markets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) to (d) The Government's attention has been drawn to the absence of satisfactory regulatory/monitorng mechanisms for promotion and usage of ISO Certificates and the ISO Certification System. Accordingly, Government proposes to undertake a comprehensive exercise to determine the existing practices relating to usage, validity and authenticity of ISO certification systems and ISO certificates with a view to streamline/ develop appropriate regulatory and monitoring mechanisms which can not only promote wider usage of the ISO certification system but also provide safeguards against incorrect usage/malpractices. To this end, Government further proposes to collect, compile and analyze the information from Ministries/Departments/PSUs/Organizations concerned. The information and the action proposed will be laid on the Table of the House at the earliest.

Mandatory ISO Certification

2250. SHRI B.P. SINGHAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that certain Government/PSUs are making ISO 9000 certification mandatory for a supplier's tender to be considered;

(b) if so, in the absence of any statutory monitoring mechanism to check the veracity of ISO certification, what advantage is going to accrue to Government or the PSU by insisting on ISO certification;

(c) whether because of this insistence, a large number of companies are adopting short-cuts by obtaining ISO certification from non-accredited franchisees or unauthentic certifying agencies; and

(d) if so, the action Government propose to take to stop this farce in the ISO certification process?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) to (d) The Government's attention has been drawn to the absence of satisfactory regulatory/monitoring mechanisms for promotion and usage of ISO Certificates and the ISO Certification System. Accordingly, Government proposes to undertake a comprehensive exercise to